Oxford Journal

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WORKERS GET FESTIVE BOOST

Cowley plant workers safer after getting job security beyond 2020

HUNDREDS of agency workers at MINI Plant Oxford are set for a more comfortable Christmas after being guaranteed job security beyond 2020.

By **Jack Johnson**

jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

A deal between BMW and Unite has seen a significant proportion of agency workers at the factory in Cowley become full-time.

The futures of thousands of agency workers across BMW sites in the UK have also been secured at Swindon Pressing, and Hams Hall.

Seven hundred of these workers were told before Christmas that they were to be made permanent with another 300 expected to hear the good news in the New Year.

Oxford East MP Andrew Smith was delighted to hear the news.

"This welcome BMW announcement is great news for Cowley and the whole community, and a credit to the Unite union who have been pressing for many more agency workers to be given permanent contracts," Mr Smith said.

"It will be great this Christmas for many long-standing agency workers to know they now have the prospect of a permanent contract."

The deal guarantees workers job security beyond 2020 and they will join the company's car scheme, receive paid holidays, sick pay and will be eligible to join the company pension scheme.

Unite and BMW have also agreed to an annual review of the scheme in order to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Roger Maddison, Unite national secretary, said: "In an uncertain world the best Christmas present for working families is job security.

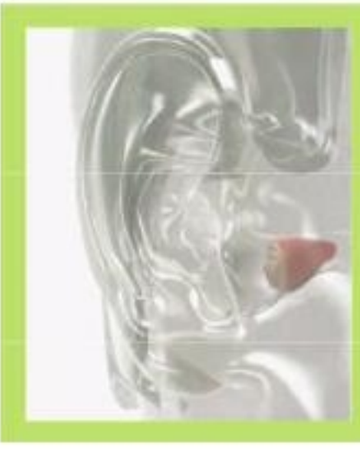
"We are delighted that 1,000 BMW agency workers are to be made permanent with guaranteed job security beyond 2020.

"This is what Unite does up and down the country on a day to day basis."

He added: "It is a prime example of unions and employers working together to make a lasting and positive impact in the workplace.

"The deal is also an indication of the strength of the car industry and the skills of the UK workforce."

Neither Unite or BMW could confirm how many agency workers had been made full-time at the Cowley plant when contacted by the Oxford Journal.



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Oxford is all set to go green and wild

By **Jack Johnson**
jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

A NEW two-year project on three wildlife sites in the city has been announced, bringing communities and people together to explore Oxford's green spaces.

The project, entitled Wild Oxford, is led by the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) in partnership with the city council.

Wild Oxford will focus on three wildlife sites in the city - Lye Valley in Headington, Rivermead Nature Park in Rose Hill and Chilswell Valley in South Hinksey.

Andy Gunn, the Wild Oxford project manager, said: "During the next two years we will be running events across the city to inspire people of all ages to explore and discover the wild green spaces in Oxford.

"We will be running workshops for people of all abilities so that they can learn traditional conservation skills including coppicing, hedgelaying and scything."

Lye Valley is tucked away behind the Churchill Hospital and is said to contain more than 300 plant species, including 20 that are on the rare plants of Oxfordshire register.

• *Andy Gunn at Rivermead Nature Park in Rose Hill*

Rivermead Nature Park lies within the busy housing estates at Rose Hill, and the Wild Oxford project will work with local people to revive the site to take forward practical conservation work.

At Chilswell Valley in South Hinksey, the plan is to clear scrub and renew interpretation signs and boardwalks which were put up more than 20 years ago.

Neil Clennell, head of conservation and education for Oxfordshire, said: "This is a fascinating opportunity to bring the people of Oxford closer to the unique and historic biodiversity of our city.

"I am delighted that the Wildlife Trust will be working with Oxford City Council and other partners, such as residents' groups and the Natural History Museum, to make this exciting project come alive."

Councillor Mark Lygo, Oxford City Council board member for Sport, Parks and Events, added: "This is an exciting project and I hope that our communities get involved."

The Wild Oxford project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund through a grant of £54,800, and a grant of £7,100 from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment with funds from Grundon Waste Management.

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Gun-wielding bus robber is wanted by cops

POLICE are searching for a man in his twenties who boarded a bus in Rose Hill and pointed a hand gun at the driver, before taking £170.

It took place on December 16 when the offender boarded the green Stagecoach double-decker bus while it was parked at The Oval at around 6.30pm.

The offender pointed a dark-coloured hand gun at the driver and demanded the money.

The victim, 25, was not injured during the incident.

Police are looking for a man of mixed race, about 25-years-old, approximately 5ft 9ins and of medium build.

He was wearing a large grey puffed jacket with the hood up and tightened around his face.

Detective constable Charles Ellis, investigating officer, said: "We would like to reassure people that this kind of crime is very rare in Oxford.

"We would urge anyone who was in the area at the time and may have seen something to please contact us."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Det Con Ellis from Oxford police station on 101.

Alternatively call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Do you have a story to share with our readers?

Contact **Jack Johnson** on **01235 516932** or jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Six arrested in flying squad raids

SIX people have been arrested in a series of co-ordinated raids as a result of a number of cash in transit robberies, including one at Natwest in Cowley back in April.

The arrests were made on December 17, as officers carried out warrants at 16 addresses in Oxford, Lambeth, Croydon, Hillingdon and Uxbridge.

Those arrested are suspected of being members of a gang who planned and committed at least seven cash in transit robberies, including the one on Cowley.

All of the robberies in question took place between October 2012 and November 2013, on security vans in Oxford, Tulse Hill, Hayes and Pinner.

They are also suspected of carrying out a robbery at Lloyds Bank in Stokenchurch on December 9.

Five men and one woman, all in their thirties, were arrested, and are in custody at a west London police station. A quantity of cash has also been recovered.

Remember a different type of donation

ACCORDING to figures from the NHS, 67 people in the county are waiting for a transplant while 21 residents have died in the last five years due to the shortage of organs.

The stats relate to figures released on December 9 and NHS Blood and Transport wish to highlight them to encourage more people to become organ donors.

An NHS survey showed that only one in 20 people in England and Wales spending time with family at Christmas will be discussing organ donation.

Anthony Clarkson, acting director of Organ Donation and Transplantation at NHS Blood and Transplant, said: "Don't miss the opportunity to discuss organ donation when you're with your family this Christmas.

"We know that Christmas is a time for enjoying ourselves and talking about the nice things in life like future holidays.

"But for people in need of an organ, Christmas is a very difficult time so we are urging everybody to talk about organ donation."

NHS Blood and Transplant is asking people to tell their families this Christmas that they want to donate their organs, and to record their decision by joining the NHS Organ Donor Register.

Visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk or call 0300 123 23 23.

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Construction starts on Oxford special school

WORK to build a new special school in Oxford has begun, with the aim of ensuring more young people with learning difficulties can be educated closer to home.

Building work began yesterday on the long-awaited MacIntyre Academy on Waynflete Road, which will focus on the needs of 25 autistic children aged 11 to 19.

By **Adam Flinn**

adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

It will open in Autumn 2014 and will be run by MacIntyre Academies, with funding being provided by the county council.

Cllr Melinda Tilley, cabinet member for children, education and families, said: "No child, regardless of their disabilities, should be denied an excellent education that is close to home.

"The new academy will transform the educational experience of some of the county's most vulnerable children, and help bring about the best possible outcomes for them.

"Parents have told me that this type of residential special school in Oxfordshire is long overdue."

Brenda Mullen, chief executive of MacIntyre Academies, said: "The establishment of this academy in Oxford builds on MacIntyre's expertise in the field of special education.

"Our ambition is to continually challenge ourselves to provide the best educational provision for children and young people with autism and learning difficulties."

Janet Johnson, special educational needs manager at the council, added: "We are delighted that MacIntyre Academies will be running the new academy.

"Over recent years MacIntyre has significantly improved the lives of some of the most disabled young people in Oxfordshire."

A ceremony was held yesterday to mark the start of building work, which was attended by representatives from the county council and MacIntyre Academies.

It also marked the start of a £250,000 fundraising appeal by MacIntyre to provide specialist equipment and facilities, to enhance the educational experience of young people.

• Cllr Ian Hudspeth and Brenda Mullen mark the start of building work at the site

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How do you like them apples?

RESEARCHERS at the University of Oxford have confirmed that an apple a day really does keep the doctor away, and could prevent around 8,500 deaths a year.

Scientists say that prescribing an apple a day to all adults aged 50 and over would lower the number of deaths from heart attacks and strokes, proving that the 150-year-old saying is still relevant today.

Dr Adam Briggs, of the British Heart Foundation (BHF) Research Group at the university, led the research.

He said: "The Victorians had it about right when they came up with their brilliantly clear and simple public health advice: 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away'.

"It just shows how effective small changes in diet can be, and that both drugs and healthier living can make a real difference in preventing heart disease and stroke."

Researchers added that these findings are similar to the 9,400 fewer heart deaths that would be seen if everyone over 50 was given the modern cholesterol-lowering drugs statins.

They added that no-one currently taking statins should stop, although they encourage them to eat more apples.

Free eye tests for drivers this Christmas

AN OPTICIANS in Cowley is championing safe driving by offering road users free vision screenings.

Specsavers in Templars Square Shopping Centre will be checking if drivers' eyes are fit for purpose with the aim of highlighting the importance of good vision while behind the wheel.

Using a series of straightforward detection exercises to spot any weaknesses in their vision, the screenings check distance perception and peripheral vision.

Jason Komodikis, store director at Specsavers in Cowley, said: "We're really keen to raise awareness of the importance of good eyesight when driving, to make sure people in the local community are safe for themselves, their family and other road users.

"I'd like to encourage as many people as possible to come down to the store and take advantage of the free screening.

"It's a quick and easy test, and if anyone who takes part in the screening requires a full examination, they will receive a free sight test during the month of December."

For more information or to make an appointment, visit Specsavers at 119 Pound Way, Templars Square Shopping Centre, Cowley, or call 01865 773344.

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Community ambassadors - we need you

OXFORDSHIRE Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) has launched a new county-wide initiative for people to become Community Ambassadors.

The Oxford-based organisation is looking for volunteer Community Ambassadors, who will have four specific roles.

Ambassadors will support their local community, enable others to volunteer, make sure local groups have access to all OCVA services and build networks locally.

Hannah Fenton, volunteering project officer at OCVA, said: "The Community Ambassador will be an important and valued source of information and advice.

"From home or in a central location in their town, they will help individuals and organisations to access the expertise they need.

"This might be matching people with volunteering opportunities, finding funding sources and giving basic advice, or encouraging more collaboration locally."

The role is for six to eight hours per week and volunteers need to be able to offer a minimum of six months from March 2014.

For more information, contact Hannah Fenton on 01865 251946.

A34 gets £5million improvement boost

• *Cllr Ian Hudspeth welcomes the planned improvements for the Chilton Interchange*

THE Department for Transport has allocated £5million of funding from its Local Pinch Point Fund, to be used on improvements on the A34.

By **Adam Flinn**
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

North-facing slip roads at the Chilton Interchange will be added, in a bid to improve transport links between Oxford and the Science Vale Enterprise Zone around Harwell.

At the moment the junction does not have access to and from the north, and it is believed that installing the additional slip roads will help to reduce traffic in the area.

As well as government funding, the £10million scheme will also be supported with money from the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth, leader of Oxfordshire County Council, said: "This is great news which demonstrates the government's confidence in our ambitions to improve transport and drive investment and innovation in that area.

"The government's announcement and the support of the Local Enterprise Partnership means that we can now begin work on planning the delivery of the road scheme.

"By adding north-facing slips at Chilton Interchange, we will provide confidence and reliability in the transport network and encourage further business investment in the Enterprise Zone."

Nigel Tipple, chief executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership, added: "We welcome this critical investment to support the Enterprise Zone and wider growth."

It is hoped that the scheme will also help to reduce the use of local roads in the area, as well as alleviate the pressure on the nearby Milton Interchange.

As a result, it is expected to create a direct route between the two Enterprise Zones of Milton Park and Harwell.

The news comes after fresh calls were made by Oxford West and Abingdon MP Nicola Blackwood for a similar scheme at Lodge Hill, which only has slip roads to and from the north.

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Consultation plans have been extended

A CONSULTATION on plans to change the county council's home-to-school transport policy has been extended into the New Year.

Proposals include options to save money by reducing the range of schools to which children would qualify for free transport.

However, in order to give people further opportunity to submit their views, the deadline for comments has been extended until January 14.

Oxfordshire County Council Leader Ian Hudspeth said: "There has been huge interest in these proposals.

"We want to ensure we are giving people as much opportunity as possible to have their say and contribute to the consultation process.

"We don't want anyone to miss out on the chance to comment and from a purely practical perspective.

"It also gives our officers more time to go through the responses we have already received and present the cabinet with a truly comprehensive picture of public opinion when we come to make a decision."

A final decision is now due to be made at a special cabinet meeting, with a date to be announced in due course.

Anyone who has yet to submit their views should visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/htspconsultation.

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Honoured for making maths a lot more fun

A MATHEMATICIAN and researcher at the University of Oxford has beaten off competition from nine other people to win the FameLab Oxford Regional Final.

Jonny Brooks-Bartlett was commended for his three-minute presentation on how interesting and fun maths can be, and the use of maths in everyday life.

He now proceeds to the national finals to be held in London on April 23, where he will be battling for a place in the international final.

Georgina Ferry, one of the panel of judges, said: "It was an incredibly tough decision to choose just one winner.

"Jonny combined content, clarity and charisma, and managed to entertain and inform us at the same time. It's a real skill to be able to present maths in such an interesting and accessible way."

Dominic McDonald, head of public engagement at Science Oxford, added: "The standard was really high this year.

"We think Jonny stands a really good chance.

The winner of the UK final will receive £1,000 for themselves and up to £750 to spend on a science communication activity, while finalists will become part of a global network of communicators.

Female inmates 'much more likely to self-harm'

A STUDY by researchers at the University of Oxford has found that female prisoners are four times more likely to self-harm than men.

By **Adam Flinn**
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Dr Seena Fazel and Professor Keith Hawton examined the prevalence of self-harm in all prisoners in England and Wales between 2004 and 2009, noting 140,000 self-harm incidents involving 26,500 inmates.

The study found 20 to 24 per cent of female inmates self-harmed, compared to around five and six per cent of men.

"Repetition rates were striking," said Dr Fazel. "If a female prisoner self-harmed, she would [be likely to] self-harm eight times per year. There were 102 women and two male inmates who self-harmed more than 100 times per year.

"While self-harm is a substantial problem across the board, it is a particularly serious issue for women in prison who make up only five per cent of the prison population but account for half of all self-harm incidents.

"Moreover, now we know the extent to which the risk of subsequent suicide in prisoners who self-harm is greater than the general prison population suicide prevention initiatives should be changed to include a focus on prisoners who are self-harming."

The researchers found several factors that increased the risk of self-harm, such as being under 20, being white, being unsentenced or having a life sentence.

Among female prisoners, a further factor was having committed a violent offence.

Cutting and scratching were the most common methods of self-harm in both sexes, followed by poisoning, overdose or swallowing objects for men and self-strangulation for women.

Self-harm was also found to be a strong risk factor for suicide in prison.

Suicide rates among men in prison who self-harmed was 334 per 100,000, around four times that of the general male prison population at 79 per 100,000.

The study was funded by the Wellcome Trust, the National Institute for Health Research, the National Offender Management Service and the Department of Health.

Kids get Christmas visit from London Welsh

MEMBERS of London Welsh's first team brought some early festive cheer to the John Radcliffe Hospital, handing out presents to some of the children in the wards.

• Rhys Crane and Andy Titterrell high five one of the children at the hospital while Matt Corker looks on (Picture courtesy of London Welsh)

Andy Titterrell, Rob Andrew, Hudson Tonga'uiha, Rhys Crane, Alan Awcock and Matt Corker, accompanied by club mascot Dewi the Dragon, sported Santa hats and carried two large boxes of presents into the hospital in Headington.

They visited children in the Kamran's, Melanie's and Robin's wards who were all surprised to see some unexpected visitors.

"It was really nice," said Matt, "the children seemed pleased to see us, particularly Dewi, and hopefully it was nice for them to have some unexpected visitors.

"Christmas is a really special time and it's important to be reminded that some people are having a much tougher Christmas than we are.

"Nobody wants to be in hospital at Christmas, especially a child, and if we can make them smile, even if only for a few minutes, then it's well worth doing."

Penny Hambridge, children's development officer, added: "We really appreciate the time the players gave us today and it is a real pleasure to see the smiles on the children's faces as they received their presents and met Dewi.

"Christmas is a time for rejoicing and anything we can do to brighten up the days for the children who have to be in hospital at this time year is greatly welcomed.

"It was a delight to see how happy some of the children were when they met the players, clearly they were a real hit!"

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Compere
Tony Cowards is a genial gagster whose material covers a wide spectrum, his quick wit has made him sought after as an act and compere by Mirth Control, Christian Knowles Productions and various independent promoters around the UK.
"Tony Cowards is a great new MC who sets the audience up perfectly, with a nice self deprecating manner" – Jo Caulfield, Radio 4 and 'Mock the Week'
Comedy nights are USUALLY the last Thursday of every month
Omar Hamdi recently appeared as tour support for Ava Vidal on selected dates of her national 2012 – 2013 tour. Omar is known across the country as one of the hardest-working and distinctive rising stars of UK comedy.
"The Welsh-Egyptian headliner delivered non-stop laughs" – Surrey Life Magazine
"Slick, classy and very clever" – Worthing Herald
Open Spots
These are fairly new comedians that are looking for some practice and stage time.
Luke Montague
Che Burnley
Headline Act
Sol Bernstein It's true! After 25 years of semi retirement, playing nursing homes, Sol Bernstein is back where he belongs, in smoky nightclubs performing to drunks. He's the man who helped the careers of Elvis Presley, Marcel Marceau (and never even got a "Thank you") and even the Beatles were influenced. He's worked with, and been friends with, some of the worlds GREATEST performers, Elvis, Judy Garland, The Rat Pack, Lenny Bruce, Jack Benny, George Burns, Milton Berle, Doris Day, Tommy Cooper, Eric Morecambe, Eddie Large.
Please bear in mind that this show will contain strong language and adult humour
Management Disclaimer: Please note – that while we make every effort, shows can change without notice due to unforeseen circumstances and commitments of artists

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A Very Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

We look forward to bringing you even more news in 2014

News Bites

Botley burglary

POLICE are investigating a burglary in Botley, after a number of electrical items were taken from a property in Pinnocks Way.

The incident took place between 12.30pm and 11.15pm on December 15, when offenders gained entry to the house through a rear window.

Call police on 101 with any information.

Upon the heath

ABINGDON & Witney College students are restoring the heathland at Shotover Hill Country Park.

Level 3 Countryside Management and Arboriculture Course students hope that by clearing the silver birch and derelict gorse the heather will be encouraged to re-sow and bring back with it a variety of insects, and rare butterflies.

The City Council is supporting the students by providing signage to set out in the area while work is in progress so passers-by will be aware of the project.

Woman charged

A 41-YEAR-OLD woman has been charged following a burglary of a house in Godstow Road, Wolvercote, which took place on December 4.

The woman, from Webb Close, Wolvercote, was charged with one count of burglary on December 6, after she allegedly stole a purse from the kitchen of the property at around 7.30pm.

She has been released on bail to appear at Oxford Magistrates' Court on January 3.

Don't get driven to distraction - council

By **Jack Johnson**

jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

• *Experts are warning drivers of hazardous road conditions similar to that of last year's floods*

ROAD safety experts are sending out a clear message this winter - drive to the weather conditions.

This is in order to help prevent road accidents in hazardous weather.

Icy and wet roads can be hazardous to road users, while stopping distances more than double on wet roads as tyre-grip is lost.

In addition, stopping distances are ten times more on an icy road than on a dry one.

Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service's Road Safety manager Mick Clarke said: "Reduced visibility and potentially slippery road surfaces can make winter driving particularly hazardous.

"It is very important that drivers adjust to the driving conditions, whether it is snowing, foggy, icy or wet or a combination of those conditions, so they have enough time to react."

Mr Clarke was also keen to issue advice on how to avoid hazardous conditions.

"Fog lamps should be used if visibility is fewer than 100 metres and sunglasses could also be worn to help counter the glare of winter sunlight," he added.

"It is also important that drivers have prepared their vehicles to be road-safe before they set off.

"Making sure tyres are at the right pressure and ensuring ice is completely cleared from windows and mirrors can help prevent a road accident.

"It is also essential that windows are completely de-misted before a journey starts, so the driver has a clear all-round view of what is going on."

Experts also recommend that motorists keep an ice-scraper, de-icer, a torch, first aid kit and a hazard warning triangle in their vehicles.

Further advice is being issued as part of the county council's Ready for Winter campaign and can also be found via 365alive, an initiative designed to reduce incidents through educational and preventative work.

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Rewarded for community integration

FOUR organisations have been rewarded with Community Integration Awards that will help promote effective opportunities for people across various backgrounds.

Cowley Road Works, Nepalese Community Oxfordshire, Slade and Headington Children's Centre and Green Square Group were rewarded by the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire Prof Graham Upton.

The organisations have been awarded £8,000 and additional mentoring on how they can provide opportunities for more effective and positive relationships across various communities.

Twenty-eight organisations applied for the awards and Prof Upton said: "It was incredibly inspiring to see so many great organisations trying to create change.

"But a little disconcerting at the same time knowing we could not help all of them and the strength of the applications made choosing the winners extraordinarily hard.

"Oxfordshire is a county of juxtapositions, it has great beauty in its historical architecture but that can mask a lot of different sides of life and discrepancies.

"Oxford is a city of great wealth and education but also has pockets of huge deprivation which has massive implications on health, crime, housing and education."

SOBELL
CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Every year, Sobell House takes care of hundreds of people in Oxfordshire. We do this through our in-patient unit, day services, Sobell Community Nurses and Palliative Care Nurses. With increasing demands for our services, we need help from the local community to raise funds. Caroline's story explains why this is so important:

"In August 2011, my husband George started to complain of stomach ache and after a lot of investigation we received the devastating news that he had pancreatic cancer.

Sobell House enabled us to be together as a family. We were all made to feel completely at home. George was at peace, in a homely atmosphere with medical expertise on hand.

We had our hand held through the worst time of our lives by people who care, and not just because it is their job, they care from their heart and souls."

Sobell House Hospice Charity Ltd.
Churchill Hospital, Oxford OX3 7LJ
Charity Registration Number: 1118646

You can make a donation to our Christmas Appeal by:

- Sending in a cheque to Sobell House Hospice Charity Ltd
- Visiting our Just Giving appeal page: www.justgiving.com/sobellchristmas2013
- Texting the word HOHO78 plus the amount you wish to donate to 70070
- Visiting our website www.sobellhospicecharity.org.uk/

Alternatively, if you want to hold a fundraising event to support the appeal, please contact our fundraising office on 01865 857007 for help and advice.

Have you or a family member ever served in the forces?

Do you know that your father, your husband, your mother, your sister, your grandfather, your girlfriend, your neighbour, your friend, your aunt, your uncle, your colleague, or your client could be entitled to help from SSAFA?

Just one day of service entitles that person to SSAFA support. Whether it is a welfare or general advice, social, domestic or professional – SSAFA may be able to help.

As the oldest service charity SSAFA have supported lot's of the ex-forces service community and their families.

We have seen many things and supported people through many issues so whether you are young or not so young if you need us we will try and help.

Call 01235 548039 for more information and in complete confidence

Ssafa.org.uk/commitment

ssafa Lifelong support for our Forces and their families

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£10 EARLY BIRD TICKETS // £12 STANDARD
10.00PM—4AM // O2 ACADEMY OXFORD

Digital Soundboy ©
O2 academy

Entertainment

Local entertainment, ranging from professional to amateur acts

If you would like your event considered for publication, please contact **Adam Flinn** at adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk or telephone 01235 516933

A plethora of talent at the O2

OXFORD'S O2 Academy has revealed the acts coming to the venue in the first months of 2014, featuring a number of mainstream and indie acts performing live on the stage.

By **Adam Flinn**

adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

January sees Los Angeles-based four-piece Warpaint come to Oxford, days after launching their eponymous second album and follow-up to debut record 'The Fool', released in 2010.

Max Raptor return to the county after their appearance at this year's Truck festival, and released their first full album 'Mother's Ruin' back in September.

The music of Johnny Cash is performed at the O2 on February 13, with tribute act CASH and frontman Ben Welburn bringing a range of the man in black's hits to a new audience.

Bristol-born 18-year-old singer Lauren Aquilina is conducting her biggest UK tour to date in February, and comes to Oxford in support of her second EP 'Sinners'.

Foxes, also known as Loui Rose Allen, comes to the O2 ahead of the release of her debut album in March, and is already believed to be a serious contender for the BRITs Critics' Choice Award next year.

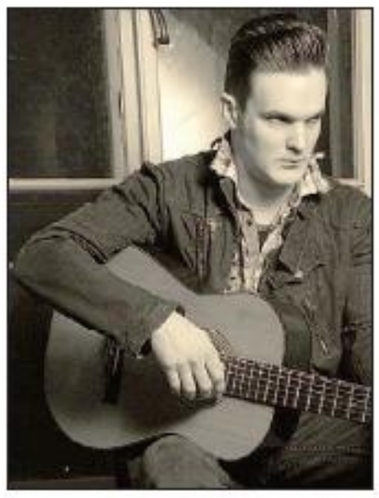
New York indie band We Are Scientists, made up of Keith Murray, Chris Cain and Andy Burrows, are back in the UK for a full tour in March, performing hits from past albums and upcoming EP 'Business Casual'.

Maximo Park are back on tour with the release of their fifth studio album 'Too Much Information' next year, playing songs from the latest release as well as their extensive back catalogue.

Singer-songwriter Katy B is in Oxford on March 27, following on from first album 'On a Mission' with new release 'Little Red', featuring the single 'Crying For No Reason'.

A full list of all the O2 Academy's shows, along with ticket prices, can be found at www.o2academyoxford.co.uk or by calling 0844 477 2000.

• *Maximo Park come to the O2 on March 18*



• *Ben Welburn as Johnny Cash is in Oxford on February 13*

• *Foxes performs from her debut album on February 28 (Picture by Luka McGhie)*

PETER YORK

Founder President of Executive Guild of Toastmasters and Town Criers

Professional Toastmaster

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01539 751251 quote OXJ

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Local entertainment, ranging from professional to amateur acts

If you would like your event considered for publication, please contact **Adam Flinn** at adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk or telephone 01235 516933

Turning a corner for 2014...

By **Adam Flinn**

adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

DIDCOT Cornerstone has announced its new shows for the start of 2014, with a range of nationally known names and local acts to entertain audiences up to the spring.

Theatrical comedy Eric and Little Ern arrives in Didcot in January, featuring experienced stage actors Ian Ashpitel and Jonty Stephens who capture the spirit of Morecambe and Wise themselves.

February begins with a performance of Shakespeare's classic play The Comedy of Errors, also regarded as one of the most farcical, telling the story of two sets of identical twins separated at birth.

Suitcase Stories, a children's production about a suitcase and its tales from journeys across the world, is at the Cornerstone on February 2.

The Reduced Shakespeare Company return to Didcot with a new show, performing the entirety of The Bible using just three actors in this comedic production.

• *Iranian comic Omid Djalili performs his two shows on February 19 and 20*

• *The Reduced Shakespeare Company are back at the Cornerstone on February 8*

Irish contemporary folk musician Cara Dillon takes to the stage with the impending release of her fifth studio album, with support from Ellie Williams.

Stand-up comedian Omid Djalili is back on tour following a sell-out season at this year's Edinburgh Festival, performing at the Cornerstone for two nights in February.

Audiences are invited to spend an afternoon with Sunny Ormonde, best known as Lilian from The Archers, as she speaks about her 12 years on the Radio Four show.

Children's rock group Kid Carpet and The Noisy Animals blast off into space on March 2, where a gorilla, a bear, a hedgehog and a badger play games and rock out at a grand dance contest.

Comedienne Lucy Porter comes to Didcot on March 7, who is known for her appearances on Have I Got News For You, Mock the Week and The Weakest Link.

All of the Cornerstone's shows, along with ticket prices and start times, can be found on www.cornerstone-arts.org or by calling 01235 515144.

READER **OFFERS**

Andalucian
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Thursday departures, 12 June, 4 & 25 September 2014
From Bristol, Luton or Stansted airports

Just across the Strait of Gibraltar from Morocco, Andalucia is simply one of the most beautiful and unspoilt corners of Europe. Its stunning cities are steeped in history with a culture influenced by the Moors and the Romans which is enriched by the greatly contrasting surrounding landscape.

- Return flight from Bristol, Luton or Stansted airports to Malaga†
  (more regional airports also offered at a supplement)
- Airport taxes & return transfer from the airport to your hotel
- 6 nights stay at the 4 star Hotel Antequera Golf, Antequera with dinner & breakfast
- A guided tour of the Great Mosque of Cordoba (Mezquita)
- Admission to the Alhambra Palace & the Generalife in Granada
- Includes 3 excursions; to Cordoba, Granada & Seville

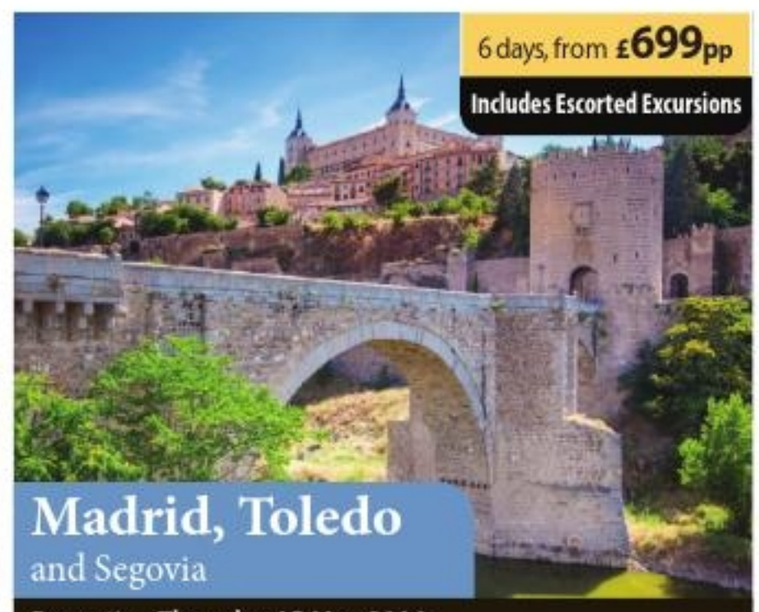
Barcelona
and Catalonia

Departing Wednesday 14 May 2014
From Bristol, Luton or Stansted airports

From Gothic to Gaudi, the ramblas to the champlas, in Barcelona there is artistry on every street corner. We'll take you to Montserrat and the Black Madonna, Figueres and the Dalí Museum, La Garrotxa with its volcanic gorges, and eleventh century Besalú with its Jewish quarter. All this, and you've still got time to stroll on the beach at Calella on the Costa Brava, visit a wine cava, and the markets at La Boqueria, or just relax in 4-star style.

Price includes:

- Return flight from Bristol, Luton or Stansted airports to Barcelona†
- Airport taxes and return transfer from the airport to your hotel
- 7 nights stay in 4 star Hotel Les Palmeres, Calella with dinner & breakfast
- Includes 3 full day excursions; to Barcelona including guided walking tour of the old town, Montserrat and Figueres with admission to the Dali Museum



Madrid, Toledo
and Segovia

Departing Thursday 15 May 2014
From Bristol or Luton airports

Discover a warm welcome in magnificent Madrid with its wonderful collections of art, stunning architecture and impeccable parks and gardens. Add to the mix a feast of fine eateries and you have a holiday to remember!

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- Included panoramic coach tour and a guided walking tour of the historical centre of Madrid
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For more information or to book call: 01539 751252 quote OXJ

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ABTA The Travel Association V4782

Organised by Omega Holidays, ABTA V4782, ATOL Protected 6081. Single supplements apply. Subject to availability. †Our price includes your flights for which we have allowed a reasonable budget. However, at your time of booking, should the cost of your flight exceed this budget, we reserve the right to charge a supplement, which we will advise you of at this time.

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Christmas Day - CLOSED, Boxing Day - CLOSED,
Friday 27th - 10.00am - 4.00pm, Saturday 28th - 9.00am - 5.00pm,
Sunday 29th - 10.00am - 4.00pm, Monday 30th - 10.00am - 4.00pm,
New Years Day - CLOSED, Thursday 2nd January - 9.00am - 5.30pm

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Entertainment

Local entertainments, ranging from professional to amateur acts

If you would like your event considered for publication, please contact **Adam Flinn** at adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk or telephone 01235 516933

12 - 31 December 2013
Burton Taylor Studio
FATHER CHRISTMAS AND THE ICICLE BICYCLE
Young children and their families will experience stories, festive songs and decoration making, whilst getting the exciting opportunity to meet Father Christmas and his team in this interactive adventure written and directed by Helen Eastman.
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

20 December
Cornerstone, Didcot
NORMA WATERSON AND ELIZA CARTHY
perform with their 6 piece band. Two of the country most finest exponents of traditional song, they will perform traditional classics and some unexpected gems
www.cornerstone-arts.org

21 December, 2pm
Wantage Civic Hall
ALADDIN PANTOMIME
Boo and hiss along with this fabulous pantomime especially for all little (and not-so-little) Genie-uses in this spectacular journey across time and space to visit the magical city of Old Peking.
Packed with comedy, excitement and adventure, the children will love to cheer their hero Aladdin and boo the evil Abanazar.
They will roar with laughter at the antics of Wishee Washee and Widow Twanky and gasp with amazement when the Genie appears, as if by magic!
The shows lasts approximately two hours.
Tickets £8.50 per person or £30 for a party of four."
www.wantagecivichall.co.uk 01235 515144

22 December
Cornerstone, Didcot
CHRIS NEWMAN AND MAIRE NI CHATHASAIGH
breathtaking blend of traditional Irish music, swing jazz and blue grass, alongside festive favourites.
www.cornerstone-arts.org

27 - 30 December 2013
Waterperry Gardens, Nr Wheatley
CHRISTMAS WEEK AT WATERPERRY GARDENS
Experience Waterperry Gardens as it has never been seen before as the estate opens during the festive period. Capture the amazing vision as the frosts adorn the gardens and enjoy a winter stroll along the Riverside walk.
Warm up with a tasty treat from Miss H, in the Teashop or just have a browse around the Gift Barn, Gallery, Plant Centre and Museum.
www.waterperrygardens.co.uk 01844 339226

30 December, 8.30pm
The Lamb, Mill St, Wantage
DAVE MOORWOOD'S RASCALS OF RHYTHM
'Betwixmas Jazz' an evening of lost gems from the song writers of the 20s & 30s presented in the Rascal's unique and swinging jazz style - no guests - just 5 of Oxfordshires best jazz musicians
No entry charge - please support the raffle the proceeds from which enables us to invite star guests from all over the country.
Phone 01235 766768 if you wish to eat to book a table or just drop in for a glass of something.

8 - 11 January 2014
Oxford Playhouse
FIJI LAND
Fiji Land is a surreal and incisive look at what happens when cell doors shut and the world looks away, directed by Oxford Playhouse/ MCS Resident Director Alice Malin.
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

10 January, 8pm
Wallingford Town Hall
TWHAS WILL BE BY LIZ WOOLLEY
Children and war: Children's experiences of WW2 in Oxfordshire'.
This talk looks at how the lives of Oxfordshire children, both those born in the county and those evacuated here, were affected by World War II. Oxfordshire escaped major bombing during World War II but the counties inhabitants were, none-the-less, heavily affected by the War.
Preparations for possible attack and invasion altered the familiar landscape and everyday life in towns and villages was disrupted. Thousands of evacuees found refuge here and became part of residents, homes and schools. Visitors (£3) are most welcome."
www.twhas.org.uk

11 January, 10am - 12pm
University Parks, Oxford, OX1 3PL
TRY ORIENTEERING AT UNIVERSITY PARKS, OXFORD!
This is an exciting introduction to orienteering, organised by Thames Valley Orienteering Club, and is aimed at newcomers, families and runners of all ages and abilities. There will be longer courses for runners as well as shorter courses for families and children. You can run, jog or walk at your own pace. If you haven't tried orienteering before, we'll help you get started. Just don't forget your sense of adventure!
You will receive a special orienteering map showing a series of control points. The challenge is choosing your route between each one. At each point in the park, you'll find a marker flag and an electronic unit to register your progress around the course, using the small electronic chip we will lend you.
Come along any time between 10am and 11.30am and give it a go. Just wear what you would for a run or walk. For more info visit our website at www.tvoc.org.uk, see our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/tvoclub or email us: publicity@tvoc.org.uk www.tvoc.org.uk/saturdayseries

12 January, 3pm
Henley Town Hall
ALLEN DIGITAL THEATRE ORGAN - PHIL KELSALL
£7, concessions £6.50
www.henleyorgantrust.org.uk

18 January, 8pm - 10pm
Jacqueline du Pr√© Music Building
NICK VAN BLOSS (PIANO)
Bach's Goldberg Variations are well known, so why hear them again? Because you've not heard them played like this!
www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/jdp 01865 286660

25 January, 8.20pm - 11pm
The Wheatsheaf High St Oxford
GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES
20.45 Gemma Moss
21.30 Barry & The Beachcombers
22.15 Molotiv Sexbomb
£4.50 on the door, cheaper at www.wegottickets.com/event/250112"
www.gappytooth.com

31 January, 8pm - 10pm
Jacqueline du Pr√© Music Building
BERNARD D'ASCOLI (PIANO)
Bernard d'Ascoli offers a delightful programme of piano works.
www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/jdp 01865 286660

1 February 2014, 7.29pm - 11pm
Jacqueline du Pr√© Music Building
MASH MARATHON
The annual M@SH Marathon returns, bringing its unique brand of innovative music-making to the JdP.
www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/jdp 01865 286660

2 February, 3pm
Henley Town Hall
ALLEN DIGITAL THEATRE ORGAN - JEAN MARTYN
£7, concessions £6.50
www.henleyorgantrust.org.uk

7 - 9 February 2014, 11am - 5pm
Oxford Town Hall
OXFORD INTERNATIONAL ART FAIR
The Oxford International Art Fair 7-9 February 2014, at the Oxford Town Hall.
With over 150 exhibitors from all over the world, that are specially coming over to Oxford for this wonderful 3-day Art Fair.
Giving Art Collectors and Art Enthusiast a once in a lifetime opportunity to buy directly from the artist that has travelled all the way to Oxford, making it a unique experience for both visitors and exhibitor, at the beautiful Oxford Town Hall, a jewel at the heart of the historic city of Oxford.
You can look forward to a varied and colourful art fair. The selection is based on photographs and illustrations, paintings, to sculptures. All artworks are available for purchase at an affordable price.
Fri 7th Feb: 18.00-21.00 Vernissage
Sat 8th Feb: 11am-17pm
Free Entry
Sun 9th Feb: 11am-15pm
Free Entry
www.oxfordinternationalartfair.com
OXFORD TOWN HALL
St Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1BX"
http://www.oxfordinternationalartfair.com

13 February 2014, 7pm - 8:30pm
Jacqueline du Pr√© Music Building
ROBIN MICHAEL (CELLO) & DANIEL TONG (PIANO)
Michael & Tong perform Brahms cello sonatas
www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/jdp 01865 286660

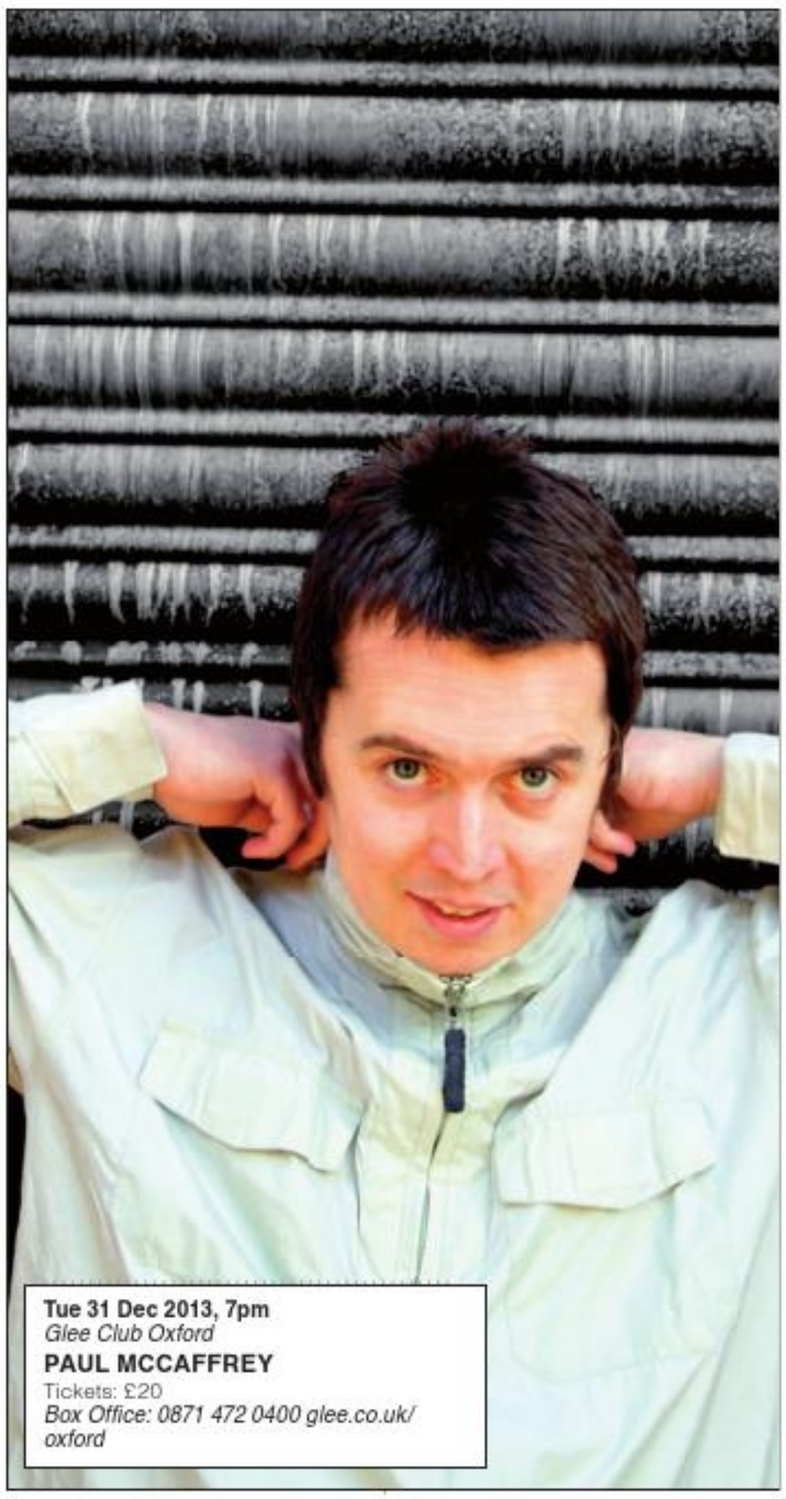
15 February, 10am - 12pm
Shotover Country Park, Oxford, OX3 8TD
TRY ORIENTEERING AT SHOTOVER COUNTRY PARK, OXFORD
This is an exciting introduction to orienteering, organised by Thames Valley Orienteering Club, and is aimed at newcomers, families and runners of all ages and abilities. There will be longer courses for runners as well as shorter courses for families and children. You can run, jog or walk at your own pace. If you haven't tried orienteering before, we'll help you get started. Just don't forget your sense of adventure!
You'll receive a special orienteering map showing your chosen course which will consist of a series of control points. The challenge is choosing your route between each one. At each point in the park, you'll find a marker flag and an electronic unit to register your progress around the course, using the small electronic chip we will lend you.
Come along any time between 10am and 11.30am and give it a go. Just wear what you would for a run or walk. For more info visit our website at www.tvoc.org.uk, see our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/tvoclub or email us: publicity@tvoc.org.uk"
www.tvoc.org.uk/saturdayseries

19 - 20 February 2014
Cornerstone, Didcot
OMID DJALILI LIVE

01235 515 144

28 February, 8pm
Jacqueline du Pr√© Music Building
MAHAN ESFAHANI (HARPSICHORD)
Spanning four centuries, this evening's programme by Esfahani covers the gamut of the harpsichord repertoire.
www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/jdp 01865 286660

8 March, 8pm - 10pm
Jacqueline du Pr√© Music Building
FITZWILLIAM QUARTET
A wonderfully rich programme from the renowned Fitzwilliam Quartet.
www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/jdp 01865 286660



Tue 31 Dec 2013, 7pm
Glee Club Oxford
PAUL MCCAFFREY
Tickets: £20
Box Office: 0871 472 0400 glee.co.uk/oxford

This is an exciting introduction to orienteering, organised by Thames Valley Orienteering Club, and is aimed at newcomers, families and runners of all ages and abilities. There will be longer courses for runners as well as shorter courses for families and children. You can run, jog or walk at your own pace. If you haven't tried orienteering before, we'll help you get started. Just don't forget your sense of adventure!
You'll receive a special orienteering map showing your chosen course which will consist of a series of control points. The challenge is choosing your route between each one. At each point in the park, you'll find a marker flag and an electronic unit to register your progress around the course, using the small electronic chip we will lend you.
Come along any time between 10am and 11.30am and give it a go. Just wear what you would for a run or walk. For more info visit our website at www.tvoc.org.uk, see our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/tvoclub or email us: publicity@tvoc.org.uk"
www.tvoc.org.uk/saturdayseries

9 March, 3pm
Henley Town Hall
ALLEN DIGITAL THEATRE ORGAN - ROBERT WOLFE
£7, concessions £6.50
www.henleyorgantrust.org.uk

13 April, 3pm
Henley Town Hall
ALLEN DIGITAL THEATRE ORGAN - JOHN MANN
£7 concessions £6.50
www.henleyorgantrust.org.uk

4 May
New Theatre
LEGENDARY PROG ROCK ICON IAN ANDERSON
A selection from his new 2014-release concept album - which he defines as Folk-Prog-Metal, in its more theatrical setting, together with a selection of Jethro Tull highlights.
£28 + £32*
0844 871 3020

27 May, 11am - 3pm
The North Wall Arts Centre
1001 NIGHTS - TRANSPORT THEATRE & UNICORN ON TOUR
Shahrazad - a lively young girl torn between her old home in the East and her new life in England, re-tells the stories of her childhood to her new-found friend, who understands not a word she says. Nominated for an Off West End Award - Best Production for Young People.
Tuesday 27th May, 11am + 2pm, £7, 6+
01865 319450

20 June, 8pm - 10pm
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Sudoku

Place a number from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so that each 3x3 block, column, and full row includes each of the numbers from 1 to 9 only once. **EASY/MEDIUM/HARD**

		4	5			8	2	
	2		9	3		4		5
1	7		8					
		3			8		6	4
7			2		6			9
4	8		7			1		
					9		3	6
3		2		1	5		7	
	6	9			2	5		

			1	9			3	
	1	7	5			8		
	3	8				9		
					5		8	
8	7						4	9
	2		9					
		9				1	5	
		2			9	4	7	
	6			1	3			

6				1			4	
9	4				8	1		
		7				2		3
	7	4	5					
					4	3	8	
7		2				9		
		8	2				1	7
	3			5				6

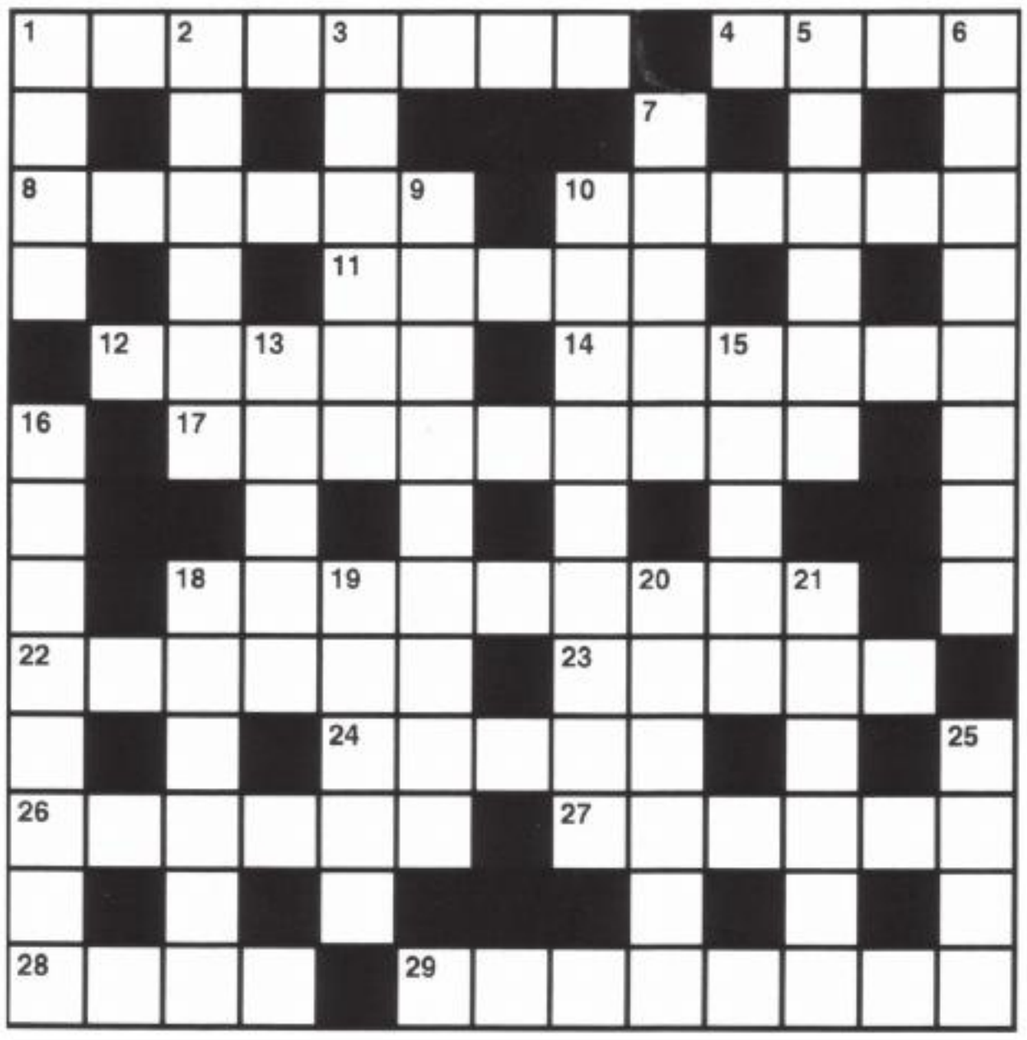
Two speed crossword

Quick Clues Across
1 Representing something abstract (8)
4 Mimics (4)
8 Sudden invasion (6)
10 Tropical fruit (6)
11 Female monarch (5)
12 Musical show (5)
14 Not substantial (6)
17 Voted in again (9)
18 Disappearing (9)
22 Facial expressions (6)
23 Literary composition (5)
24 Move furtively (5)
26 Divides (6)
27 Linen fabric (6)
28 Satisfy fully (4)
29 Manipulators (8)

Quick Clues Down
1 Whirl (4)
2 Malicious killing (6)
3 Dull (6)
5 Calm (6)
6 Least big (8)
7 French Impressionist painter (5)
9 Contestants (9)
10 Position established by invaders (9)
13 Easily corrupted (5)
15 Guides for horses (5)
16 Continues to exist (8)
18 Fragrant plant (6)
19 Snug places (5)
20 Land mass surrounded by water (6)
21 Car shelter (6)
25 Glides on snow (4)

Cryptic Clues Across
1 Persons of rank who don't go skating? (8)
4 Retain part of 14 (4)
8 Everyone taken in by bad song (6)
10 Secure for salvage (6)
11 New diets are named we hear (5)
12 Sacks the ingrates (5)
14 Fortress in which to throw the French (6)
17 Possibly cast carp hence (9)
18 Shrinking from girl I once upset (9)
22 How the Count got framed (6)
23 Bury in the main terminus (5)
24 It's no secret when they are spilt (5)
26 Ned in trouble? Fastened on quite the opposite (6)
27 Egg and roe for dragonkiller (6)
28 We hear you will get it at Christmas (4)
29 At the seaside they go out regularly (3,5)

Cryptic Clues Down
1 Spheres of vision? (4)
2 Sounds like the Duke of Edinburgh's tonic (6)
3 Search wildly for what follows (6)
5 No longer a sight, we hear, to agitate (6)
6 No absence of gifts by the sound of it (8)
7 This litter could well be tidy (5)
9 Revealed Pluto was shut up (9)
10 Bringing to mind a change of name (9)
13 Upset the beer before a hundred get the instrument (5)
15 Being deficient can be taken in by holy man (5)
16 Clumsy and unlikely to make a profit (8)
18 A 'spoken' line? (6)
19 Squares can be so solid (5)
20 Possibly a fly little thing (6)
21 Agreed it could be equipped (6)
25 The best sort of wagers (4)



Scribble space

Last week's solutions

4	1	7	5	2	6	3	9	8
5	3	8	4	7	9	6	1	2
2	9	6	1	3	8	7	4	5
8	4	1	9	6	5	2	3	7
7	5	3	2	8	1	9	6	4
6	2	9	7	4	3	8	5	1
1	6	5	8	9	7	4	2	3
9	7	4	3	5	2	1	8	6
3	8	2	6	1	4	5	7	9

4	5	7	3	6	8	2	9	1
8	1	9	5	2	7	3	4	6
6	2	3	9	1	4	8	5	7
9	7	2	6	8	3	5	1	4
1	4	5	2	7	9	6	8	3
3	6	8	1	4	5	9	7	2
7	3	4	8	9	2	1	6	5
5	9	6	4	3	1	7	2	8
2	8	1	7	5	6	4	3	9

5	3	8	4	6	9	1	7	2
6	1	2	8	7	5	9	3	4
7	9	4	3	2	1	6	5	8
9	6	5	2	3	4	7	8	1
2	7	1	5	8	6	3	4	9
4	8	3	1	9	7	2	6	5
3	2	7	9	5	8	4	1	6
1	5	9	6	4	3	8	2	7
8	4	6	7	1	2	5	9	3

Quick Crossword
Across: 4 Across 8 Inflate 9 Toddle 10 Cover girl 11 Dial 13 Inane 14 Ascends 16 Setting 18 Idler 19 True 21 Semi-final 22 Antics 23 Endemic 24 Theory
Down: 1 Announcer 2 Alternate 3 Stage 5 Cool 6 Ordain 7 Spells 9 Trust 11 Deadlines 12 Adrenalin 15 Andes 16 Strait 17 Turtle 20 Diana 21 Scar

Cryptic Crossword
Across: 4 Coffer 8 Portion 9 Places 10 Stevedore 11 Sore 13 Tripe 14 Amperes 16 Couples 18 Peers 19 Erne 21 Tolerates 22 Saloon 23 Circles 24 Siding
Down: 1 Posterior 2 Stovepipe 3 Bonds 5 Ogle 6 Factor 7 Rushes 9 Prime11 Severance 12 Retriever 15 Felon 16 Census 17 Unclad 20 Refit 21 Town

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Closing date:

Friday, December 27

THE X FACTOR on which Chic recently performed a medley of three of their biggest hits.

The original edition of the album charted at No. 2 and has remained in the charts since its release in June. This new Disco Edition features not only the biggest early hits such as 'Le Freak', 'Good Times', 'Upside Down' and 'He's The Greatest Dancer' but later number one singles, Duran Duran's 'The Reflex', Sister Sledge's 'Frankie' and Madonna's 'Like A Virgin'.

In additional to these new tracks the album includes an amazing 'Chic Minimix' which features 12 of their biggest tracks mixed together for 7 minutes of aural heaven. The new version of the album is completed with an exclusive inclusion of some of Chic's memorable performances at this year's Glastonbury Festival.

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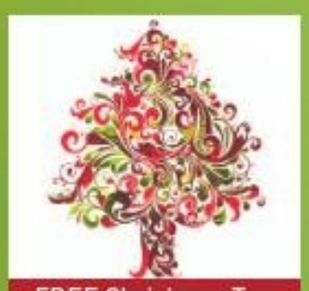

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AUTOWEEKLY

It's the saloon of choice

BMW'S 5-series needs little introduction. For decades it's been the saloon of choice for the keen driver and more recently the frugally-minded Fleet Manager.

REVIEW: BMW 5-series

By **Philip Shoulder**

@writeonmotoring

Effectively replacing the Efficient Dynamics model, and offering improved efficiency, this latest 520d sits in the lower section of the range, but the M Sport option adds a sportier look, with bigger 18-inch wheels and stiffened suspension.

The headline news however, is the lower emissions and increased fuel efficiency: BMW claim 62.8 mpg and 117g/km for the cheaper SE-spec car. The bigger wheels on this M-Sport example bring economy down slightly to 57.6 mpg – the trade-off for sharper handling.

On the road the new 5-series certainly lives up to its reputation as a keen driving machine and immediately impresses with its fluid and balanced handling. The superb steering balance and feel embarrasses many rivals too. Ride refinement is now much improved – further helped with the optional Variable Damper Control, which ensures the 5-series composure is maintained, even on bumpy and rutted country roads.

Although precise enough, the six-speed manual box is less enjoyable to use, having a slightly notchy quality to its action, but many buyers will go for the eight-speed ZF automatic option – especially as it returns identical economy figures.

Although the usual four-cylinder diesel clatter seems incongruous with a large BMW, the 2.0 litre motor quietens down once under way and feels strong and punchy, if not outright rapid.

The cabin feels very upmarket - helped by the standard Black Dakota leather - while the BMW Business Navigation system is also now included on all variants. The driving position is very good, as is the comfort and support of the seats. All models get electric adjustment for the seat height and backrest angle, but seat sliding fore and aft is done manually.

Although far from cramped, with plenty of room for four, interior space certainly isn't class-leading and comfort of a third rear passenger will be compromised by the chunky transmission tunnel. Boot space is good though, at 520 litres.

Verdict:

The latest incarnation of the BMW 5-series skillfully blends class-leading driving appeal, prestige and comfort with efficient and powerful engines, strong residual values and low running costs. Little wonder it was recently crowned 'best executive car' by Fleet World magazine earlier this year.

• *The new BMW 5-series*

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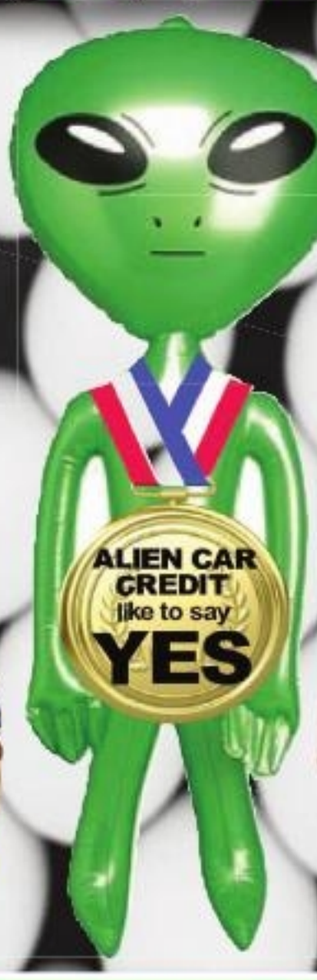

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HOPES ARE HIGH FOR WILDER'S U'S

Good away form, late drama and injuries all prevalent in Oxford's season

By **Jack Johnson**

jack@taylornewspapers.co.uk

• James Constable is congratulated by his team-mates after scoring earlier this season against Dagenham & Redbridge. (Picture by Steve Daniels)

IT'S been quite a start to the season for Oxford United.

At the time of going to print, United were top of League Two, into the third round of the FA Cup and on an eight-match unbeaten run in all competitions.

However, it has been far from easy.

At the beginning of December, manager Chris Wilder was allowed to speak to Portsmouth regarding their vacant manager's position, but fears over his exit were soon quashed when Richie Barker was appointed the new boss at Fratton Park.

United have also been plagued by injuries throughout the campaign.

Deane Smalley has netted seven goals in all competitions but has been in and out of the treatment room, while Jon Meades has been sidelined since pre-season.

Alfie Potter and Andy Whing are out until the New Year while captain Jake Wright has also been on the sidelines.

However, this has allowed the likes of Josh Ruffels, Callum O'Dowda, Matt Bevans, David Lynn and Sam Long an opportunity to impress.

Despite the injuries, United's away record has been impeccable this season.

As the Journal went to print, Wilder's men had recorded six wins and three draws on the road in the league while their home form shows signs of improvement.

Some would argue the ability to score late goals is a vital component for a successful side and United have not been short of those this year.

Johnny Mullins struck late to earn a win against Bury and he also came up with a last minute equaliser against Wycombe Wanderers.

Late efforts from Smalley and Danny Rose saw United come back from 2-0 down to earn a first round replay in the FA Cup against Gateshead, with Smalley scoring a 116th minute penalty to send the U's through.

Dave Kitson has also come up with two valuable goals in recent weeks. First, an 89th minute equaliser at Fleetwood Town and then a 91st minute winner at home to Dagenham & Redbridge.

James Constable, an ever present fixture in United's attack over the last five years, has not been short of goals this season either.

Beano has netted seven goals, helping him to reach over 100 strikes for the club.

This Boxing Day afternoon, United are in action at home to Plymouth Argyle before they host Scunthorpe United at the Kassam Stadium in three days time.

Wilder's men begin 2014 in Wales with an away trip to Newport County before they head to Championship side Charlton Athletic in the third round of the FA Cup on January 4.

As a New Year looms, hopes and expectations are certainly high at Oxford United.

Welsh continuing push for Premiership return

LONDON Welsh will head into the New Year in good spirits.

Justin Burnell's side played their final match of 2013 last Saturday as they faced London Scottish at the Kassam Stadium.

As the Journal went to print, the Exiles had only lost once in the Green King IPA Championship and were the clear league leaders.

Before their match against London Scottish, Burnell had been impressed by the strength and depth of his squad.

A second-string line-up recorded two convincing victories over Edinburgh Accies in the B&I Cup where the Exiles scored a combined total of 106 points, conceding only 17.

Welsh begin the New Year with a trip to lowly Jersey RFC on January 4 before back-to-back games in the B&I Cup.

First they host Pontypridd on January 12 before facing London Scottish at the Richmond Athletic Ground six days later.

The Exiles return to league action on January 26 when they welcome Leeds Carnegie to the Kassam.

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